

LISTING OF CLAIMS

For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants reproduce herein below the pending claims of the present invention.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said raw material milk is selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said raw material milk is a casein-containing solution obtained by processing a raw material milk selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said reducing agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of reduced glutathione, cysteine, γ -glutamylcysteine, sulfurous acid, ascorbic acid, erythorbic acid, salts thereof, and preparations containing at least one of these reducing agents.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said reducing agent is added in an amount of 1×10^{-5} to 1×10^{-1} g per 1 gram of non-fat milk solid, present in said raw material milk.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said transglutaminase is caused to act upon the raw material milk in an amount of 0.001 to 20 units per 1 gram of milk protein, present in said raw material milk.

7. (Previously Presented) A dairy product which has been obtained, or can be obtained, by using the raw material milk modified by the method of Claim 8.

8. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing a dairy product, comprising modifying a raw material milk by causing transglutaminase to act on said raw material milk, wherein a reducing agent is added to said raw material milk when said transglutaminase is caused to act on said raw material milk.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said raw material milk is selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof, and

wherein said reducing agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of reduced glutathione, cysteine, γ -glutamylcysteine, sulfurous acid, ascorbic acid, erythorbic acid, salts thereof, and preparations containing at least one of these reducing agents.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said reducing agent is added in an amount of 1×10^{-5} to 1×10^{-1} g per 1 gram of non-fat milk solid, present in said raw material milk.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein said transglutaminase is caused to act upon the raw material milk in an amount of 0.001 to 20 units per 1 gram of milk protein, present in said raw material milk.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said transglutaminase is caused to act upon the raw material milk in an amount of 0.001 to 20 units per 1 gram of milk protein, present in said raw material milk.

13. (Previously Presented) A modified raw material milk, prepared by a method, comprising modifying a raw material milk by causing transglutaminase to act on said raw material milk, wherein a reducing agent is added to said raw material milk when said transglutaminase is caused to act on said raw material milk.

14. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said raw material milk is selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof.

15. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said raw material milk is a casein-containing solution obtained by processing a raw material milk selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof.

16. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said reducing agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of reduced glutathione, cysteine, γ -glutamylcysteine, sulfurous acid, ascorbic acid, erythorbic acid, salts thereof, and preparations containing at least one of these reducing agents.

17. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said reducing agent is added in an amount of 1×10^{-5} to 1×10^{-1} g per 1 gram of non-fat milk solid, present in said raw material milk.

18. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said transglutaminase is caused to act upon the raw material milk in an amount of 0.001 to 20 units per 1 gram of milk protein, present in said raw material milk.

19. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said raw material milk is selected from the group consisting of raw milk, skimmed milk, partially skimmed milk, and processed milks thereof, and

wherein said reducing agent is at least one compound selected from the group consisting of reduced glutathione, cysteine, γ -glutamylcysteine, sulfurous acid, ascorbic acid, erythorbic acid, salts thereof, and preparations containing at least one of these reducing agents.

20. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said reducing agent is added in an amount of 1×10^{-5} to 1×10^{-1} g per 1 gram of non-fat milk solid, present in said raw material milk.

21. (Previously Presented) The modified raw material milk of Claim 13, wherein said transglutaminase is caused to act upon the raw material milk in an amount of 0.001 to 20 units per 1 gram of milk protein, present in said raw material milk.